



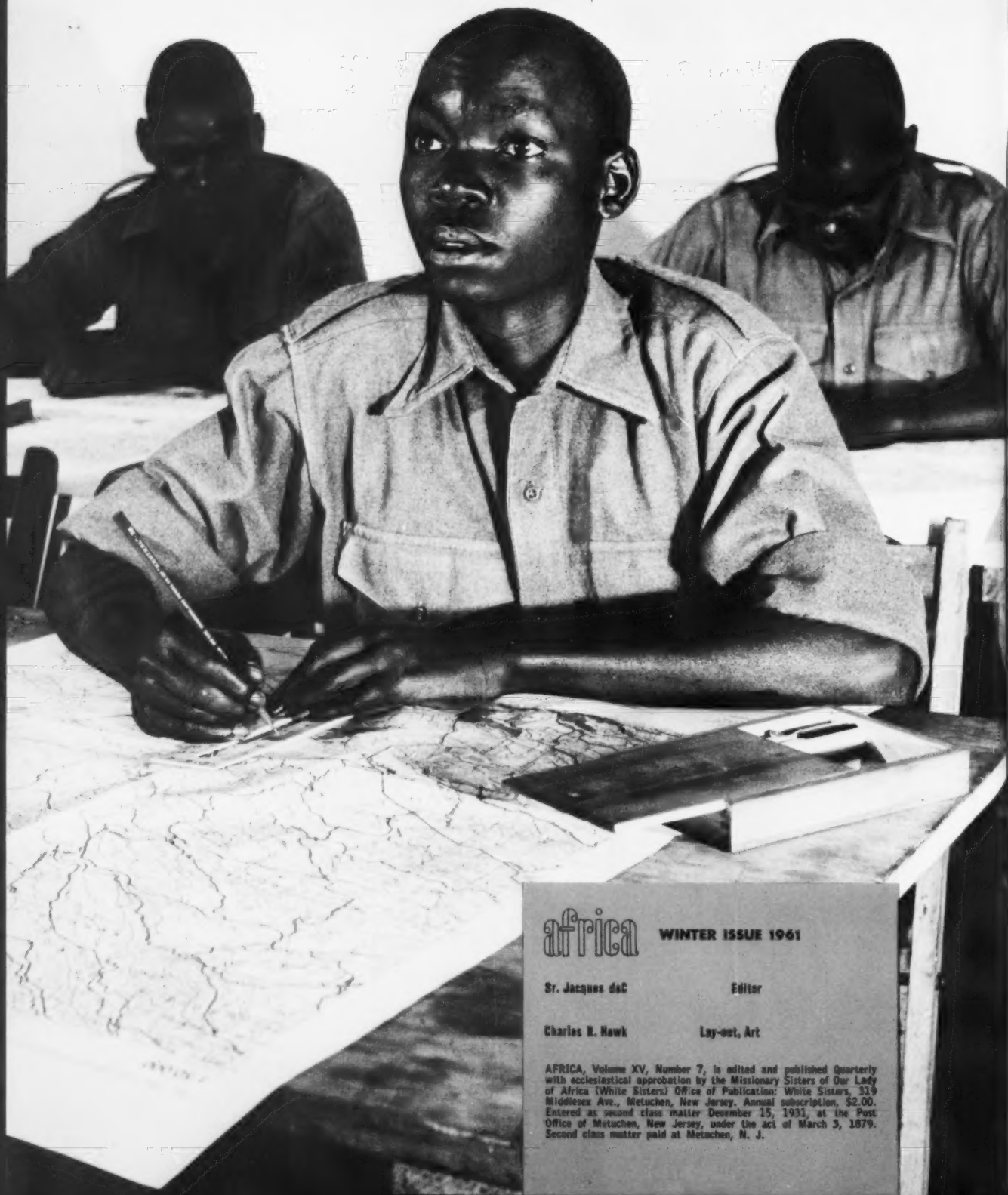
NEW WORLD ON THE HORIZON

Photo: Government General of L.A.O.F.

africa

published quarterly by The White Sisters

WINTER — 1961-1962



africa

WINTER ISSUE 1961

Sr. Jacques deC

Editor

Charles R. Hawk

Lay-out, Art

AFRICA, Volume XV, Number 7, is edited and published Quarterly with ecclesiastical approbation by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters) Office of Publication: White Sisters, 319 Middlesex Ave., Metuchen, New Jersey. Annual subscription, \$2.00. Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the Post Office of Metuchen, New Jersey, under the act of March 3, 1879. Second class matter paid at Metuchen, N. J.



NEW WORLD ON THE HORIZON

*"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere.*

(LONGFELLOW)

THE FABULOUS RISE OF AFRICA in the world of today, brings to mind those splendid and sudden sunrises in equatorial regions, where, practically without transition, one passes from "the shadows of night" into the dazzling light of day.

No sooner has Africa roused herself from her legendary lethargy than she sets about asserting her personality and human values, means to assume her responsibilities and bring to world organization her own particular participation, active and efficacious, on a par with all other nations.

Her young independent States — and those on the way to independence — wish to be modern, and rightly so: Modern in every sense of the word . . . be it in the technical, commercial, agricultural, social or cultural field.

*"Out of the shadows of night
Africa rolls into light . . ."*

The stakes are enormous — and enormous the effort to be sustained in realizing so much in so little time: such an adaptation, such a transformation of things and men.

At the same time, it is strikingly evident that among the innumerable problems confronting modern Africa, none is so crucial as that of educating the masses.

In Tropical Africa, out of 25 million school-age children, 17 million have no means of instruction; and among the 8 million fortunate, hardly 260,000 have the chance to attain secondary school level.

And what is true of the generality of African children, is particularly so of the girls — for every four boys who have the possibility of attending school, only one girl has that advantage.

For us, considering the question not only from the point of view of human advancement, but from that also of the Kingdom of God, this problem takes on another significance . . . and gives rise to anxiety: What sort of instruction will be meted out to the youth of Africa thirsting for progress and emancipation?

*"The education of the young is the
renovation of the world — the re-
novation of Africa!"*

Granted — but on condition that the education we give the young should prepare them for a progressive emancipation, which, based on sound moral and spiritual principles, does not encourage license or turn into a selfish individualism, but on the contrary, makes them capable of raising the tribal conception of family life.

SISTER JACQUES DE COMPOSTELLE, W.S.



In a few years the young African girl has come a distance that took us centuries to travel — a longer route than that which led from the ox-cart to the Sputnik.



Photo: White Sisters

A NEW LIFE IS BURSTING FORTH

Photo: Amnesty, UNESCO

Mrs. Trenou, Secretary General of the Union of Women of Togoland.

"Now, a new vocabulary is giving rise to new aspirations in African hearts; with "independence", with "liberty" — with the "rise of Africa" — woman is going to take her true place in a new society."





"Yesterday I taught her to read, to make sentences and solve problems. Today it is she who presents the problem and it is I who must solve it."

Photo Government General. A.O.

THE YOUNG WOMAN stepped lightly from a fine motor car; I have no idea which make it was, but the youngsters playing under the great Kapok trees certainly knew at a glance.

The young lady was African, tall and slim, elegant in her national costume with a gold lame turban encircling a mass of straightened hair, and fashionable "sarabas" of dark blue leather.

She calmly made her way through the closely packed audience and took her place on the platform amid murmurs of appreciation. She spoke perfect English without the least hesitation.

The young lady had been her country's delegate at the seminar organized by UNESCO in Addis Ababa, and now she had come to tell her compatriots the wishes and suggestions presented by the women of Africa concerning their status in society.

The listeners followed attentively as she exposed

the claims of women in all under-developed countries. Too long had woman been but a slave in African society; subject to man's whims, devoid of personality or culture, she had been debased during the course of centuries; the colonial regime had not contributed to woman's evolution . . . on the contrary . . .

But now a new vocabulary was giving rise to new aspirations in African hearts; with "independence," with "liberty"—with the "rise of Africa"—woman was going to take her true place in a new society.

No longer would she be the "slave" or "house-keeper"—but the queen of the home. Her place was on a level with man's—for there was no doubt about it, she was his equal . . .

Like her male counterpart the African woman could hope to influence her country's destiny. She too could be a minister or deputy—she had her own



A NEW LIFE IS BURSTING FORTH

(Continued)

ideas which were well worth those of any political man. . .

The gentlemen in the audience were perhaps a little embarrassed, but the ladies were already transported to a political paradise, so far removed from the hut in which their grandmothers had pounded the grain. . . A real reform would have to be brought about, affecting everything from the elementary education of girls to those principles of education which give them equal rights with their brothers.

The speaker was enthusiastically applauded. A few objections came from the audience — all presented by men; the women were silent. So vast was the horizon which spread before them — so near the influence of the tribe . . . still hemmed in by so many customs, yet drawn by a new world developing at a frightening speed. They wanted to enter this swirl of progress but felt incapable of freeing themselves from the past that had moulded them.

The crowd dispersed slowly . . . practically in silence. The sleek motor car carried the young lady off. The White Sisters returned to their convent.

The young woman who had just spoken was one of my former pupils; I could show you her hut over there near the baobab tree; I could tell you of the difficulties the little school-girl had in remembering her vocabulary and in understanding the meaning of the terms "liberty" and "progress."

In those days the education of girls seemed an undertaking as useless as it was impossible — no one was for it — neither the child nor her parents. . . We persisted, perhaps without seeing clearly where our efforts were leading. Certainly no White Sister could have foreseen this young lady inviting her fellow-countrywomen to participate in their country's evolution.

In a few years the young African girl has come a distance that it took us centuries to travel — a longer route than that which led from the ox-cart to the Sputnik.

Yesterday I taught her to read, to make sentences and solve problems. Today it is she who presents the problem and it is I who must solve it. It was so much easier to teach participles than to guide that mind athirst for independence . . . so much easier to prepare her for her examinations, than to teach this young graduate that eternal values still come first, and that her country's progress only counts in view of the Kingdom of God.

She had recited to me her Catechism in her native language and I had taught her to pray. I had no idea she would one day go to Addis Ababa, nor that she would understand the United Nations better than the Catholic Church.

The definition of the Catholic Church is in the Catechism . . . and the law of charity which should unite all men . . . But today's vocabulary has no place in it: colonialism, independence, segregation, progress . . . and those are the words uppermost in African minds — those are the questions that must be answered. And not just any answer. For perhaps the greatest error on the part of the missionary, would be to underrate the questions and demands of those whom she taught to read.

For the past few years the structure of African society has been falling apart; the past is dying, a new life is bursting forth everywhere. May the new Africa rise from its ashes, not by violence and hatred, but by the vigorous dynamism of youth, ever ready to fight for the right and the good and to resist oppression from wherever it may come.

SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY, W.S.

"So vast is the horizon which
spreads before them . . .
still hemmed in by so many customs,
yet drawn by a new world
developing at a frightening speed."

Photo: UNESCO



TOGOLAND. Crushing manioc, the
traditional task of women in
tropical Africa. "... the ladies
were already transported to a
political paradise, so far removed
from the hut in which their grand-
mothers had pounded the grain
..."

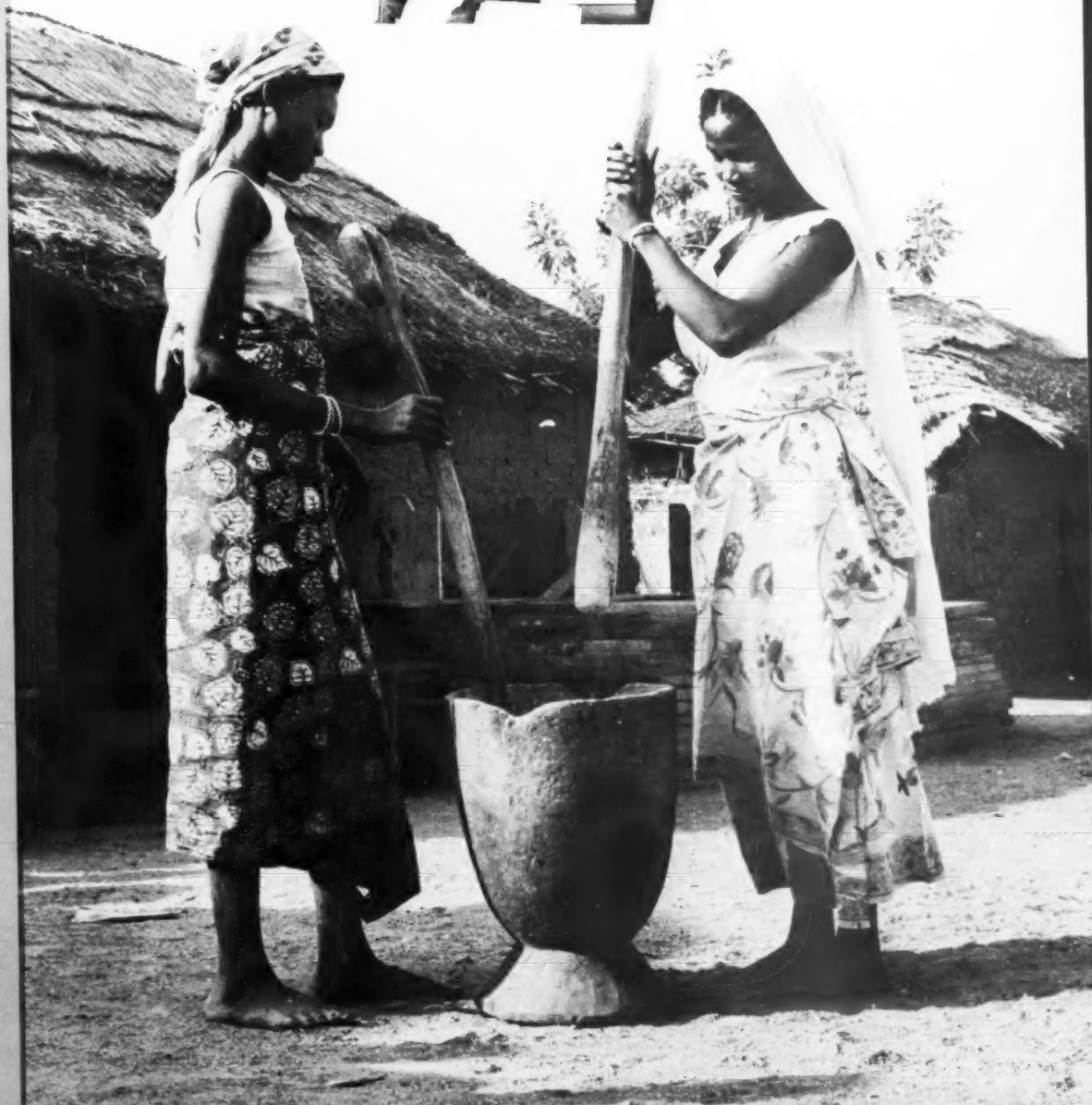


Photo: Alamy, UNESCO.



DAYBREAK IN UGANDA



BIG TEARS welled up in the eyes of the little girl, as she watched her brother deliberately and in silence throw away the water she had gone all the way to the forest-well to fetch for him. What was the matter? Was it dirty? She had carefully skimmed off the top water before filling her jar with the clearer water underneath. It couldn't be that. She looked at him questioningly, not daring to speak to this severe brother of hers, just a year or so older than herself. "How does a girl offer anything to a superior?" he asked at length.

The little girl sank to her knees. It was true. She had forgotten to kneel down while, with her two hands cupped together, she offered her brother the drink of water she had brought him. "Now, bring me some more," he said, not unkindly, but just as one teaches a child a lesson in politeness.

This story was written quite recently — though not in these words — in a composition of a girl in a Senior Secondary School at Nabbingo. The story, however, obviously reflected the writer's own approval of the brother's attitude, and she added: "The girl never forgot to kneel down again."

Does this mean that girls in Uganda are content with their age-long position of servitude and seek for nothing better? Far from it. Girls are evolving rapidly and the better-educated ones at least are very much alive to their own importance in a developing and soon-to-be-independent Uganda. They are pre-occupied with the urgency of their country's progress and of women's attainment to something like equality with men. Men, too, are anxious that their women-folk should not lag behind them in education. Makerere Catholic Students are sincerely

Alert, willing and responsible girls. Above all, they have learned to shoulder responsibility

Setting up camp near Kampala, Uganda





DAYBREAK IN UGANDA

(Continued)

troubled about the fewness of Catholic girls at the University, and ask where they are going to find wives. Men of all ranks want their wives to go to the numerous women's clubs springing up and flourishing all over the country. Wives have their say in running the home and are listened to by their husbands. Fathers want their daughters as well as their sons to be better educated than themselves. Where the father is unable or unwilling to pay for his daughter's education a brother or cousin, even if still a student himself, will frequently make great sacrifices to educate his sisters or girl-cousins. And the girls themselves are as eager for education as the boys.

After an absence of nine years I returned to

Nabbingo, a Junior and Senior Secondary School for girls and was amazed at the difference in the pupils' outlook. Not only was there a marked academic improvement, but the spirit of the place was transformed. Alert, willing and responsible girls replaced the heavy, sometimes truculent, ones I had left. Why, when one makes a sign now-a-days to call a girl from a distance she actually runs! Above all, they have learned to shoulder responsibility. There were no prefects or leaders in the old days! It was as much as we could do to find one girl in the whole school we could shape into some kind of a school captain, so frightened were the girls of revenge being taken by anyone who might think herself harshly treated. Now, besides the school Captain there is a whole

Art at Nabbingo.

Photo: Department of Information, Uganda





Music at Nabbingo.

Photo: Department of Information, Uganda

team of leaders, each with her own duties and powers, which they take seriously but without any overbearing. At the School Council which is held every week under the presidency of the school Captain and in the presence of the Headmistress, good and bad marks are collected and later totaled, and any suggestions and remarks for the better running of the school are made and discussed among themselves. The School Council is a very real instrument for good in the life of the School.

The Young Christian Students' Association also develops a sense of responsibility and trains girls to be leaders and to use their influence for good. They made up and acted a play among themselves, the theme of which was Christian marriage and in which the heroine was a more potent influence for good than the hero. The pupils' parents who watched the play with great interest and keen enjoyment were,

in some cases, somewhat perturbed to see the wives in the play sitting beside their husbands on chairs instead of on the ground at their feet. The long discussion about paying the dowry, which in the play ended with the father's decision to accept no bride-price for his daughter, was not enthusiastically applauded by the majority of old-fashioned parents, although the more enlightened minority and the students themselves no longer wish to see girls sold like cattle.

Girls too are beginning to think things out for themselves. Debates among themselves and with one or two boys' schools are developing their reasoning powers, as well as their speaking ability.

Is this emancipation of women and girls going to their heads? Is it making them exacting, proud and selfish? On the whole I think not. They look on their ever-widening opportunities as power for good. "I

DAYBREAK IN UGANDA (Continued)

want to help my country" has become a hackneyed phrase in Uganda, but one that means a great deal to girls. Of course they want nylon dresses, of course they want to be attractive, but more than all that, they want to be good wives and mothers, they want to keep Communism out of their country, they want Uganda to be a respected and happy nation when self-government comes. I wish I could add, as a climax, that they want their country to be deeply and fervently Christian. But I am afraid that would be true only of a very small minority. They *do* want it of course, up to a point, but one has the impression that even religion must be at the service of a greater Uganda . . . just one more means of progress, rather as the Jews looked to Yahweh to make their race the dominant power of the world: God at the service of man's temporal prosperity instead of man's temporal interests at the service of his spiritual ones and both at the service of God.

Progress is the order of the day. But so is nationalism, or at its best patriotism. They want to imitate Europeans, but they also want to be themselves, and rightly so. They are jealous of their own language, customs and traditions, and it is a policy among the two Societies founded by Cardinal Lavigerie that the Africans should retain all that is not anti-Christian in their own heritage. How then are they to make the two things tally: woman's traditional place of dependence and servitude and her new aspirations to freedom and power? Time will show. It is not the first time in history that a similar dilemma has had to be faced, and we can look to the future not without misgivings certainly, but with confidence that the women of Uganda will be a leaven of wisdom and goodness in the future of their country.

SISTER MARY JOHN, W.S.

Makerere University. Kampala.

Makerere Catholic Students are sincerely troubled about the fewness of Catholic girls at the University, and ask where they are going to find wives.





His reasoning was worthy of the clearest passages of
"Alice in Wonderland".

... "Government of the people? We are the people.
We are the government. What we say goes!"



Barbara ... was not hesitating the audience to agree with her,
she was telling them what they ought to think
if they had any intelligence at all.
... We had designed "bite".

BEAUTY, BRAINS, AND "BITE" OUR DEBATING CAREER



Sister CHRISTOPHER and two of her students take time off from "debating".

(Photo Mother Marie des Neiges.)

BEAUTY, BRAINS, AND "BITE"

OUR DEBATING CAREER began in 1956, when the Mombasa Teachers Association started an inter-Secondary School contest. We had to provide a team of four girls to oppose the boys from a local Indian school, and we were to speak for the abolition of corporal punishment. The first difficulty was to find girls willing to speak. The next was to convince the chosen ones that debating is not the same as standing up and making, or reading a speech. I gave examples: "Suppose your opponent says . . ." Then you can say: "My opponent has just said . . . but that is wrong. The truth is . . ." and we practiced.

When the day came, our leader made a carefully reasoned speech, bravely delivered. Number two and number three read, (in spite of all we had told them!) and number four read gaily, "My worthy opponent has just said . . ." whereas her worthy op-

ponent had said nothing of the kind. She had prepared her points and she was determined to use them, in season or out of season. Of course, we lost. The boys demolished our arguments with fine masculine contempt. The judges must have had no difficulty at all in making their decision . . . But at least the four victims had had the courage to stand up and speak.

In 1957 we put up a better show. The motion was that "History is nothing but a record of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind." We had Indian girls against us. Their pronunciation of English was rather odd but, as the chief judge remarked, "They had *bite*," which our polite little convent-school girls lacked. We lost, but I felt we had no reason to feel ashamed.

In 1958 we astonished ourselves by winning the first two rounds and being beaten only in the finals.



Altogether with the part played by our Inter-Secondary School debates, much importance is given in the curriculum to music and plays — executed each year with much success, at one or other of the town's large Halls.

We had developed "bite." We thoroughly enjoyed the semi-finals. Corporal punishment was the issue once again and our opponents were the boys of the Arab Secondary School. We had the good fortune to discover in an educational magazine an article on the school, by the principal. In it he stated that the "Discipline was good," Our leader made the most of it. The "discipline was good" but no mention was made of corporal punishment. If it wasn't used, they could obtain good discipline without it, so corporal punishment was quite unnecessary. If it was used, why wasn't it mentioned by the principal in his article on the school? Didn't that show that there was something "shady" about corporal punishment?

But a girls' team knocked us out in the finals, asserting that "beauty is more important than brains." We had not considered moral beauty sufficiently; they, invoking beauty under that aspect, proved that even Mr. Churchill was beautiful, since

he had a beautiful character! His greatness was a by-product of his beauty.

The following year we began by defending the old proverb, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," with much thumping on the chairman's table and waving threatening fists at our opponents. Then we insisted that "Schooldays are the happiest days of our life" — and roundly reprimanded some Goan school-boys who exaggerated the troubles of adolescence.

Six days before the finals, Chantal Almeida, the leader of our team, went down with chickenpox. We trained a stand-in but, providentially, it was only a mild attack. The spots were dry on the day of the debate. Chantal was briefed on what her companions were to say, and the line they expected her to take. She was ready for action, if a trifle weaker than usual.

We met the Arab Boys again and they were striv-

BEAUTY, BRAINS, AND "BITE" (Continued)

ing to make people believe that "Higher education for girls is a waste of time, money and energy." I say "Arab Boys" . . . "Young men" would be more appropriate. They were six-footers, some of them, and I am not sure that they were all still in their teens. Their confidence in themselves was wonderful to behold.

The debate was held in a large new hall belonging to the Goan Institute. The District Commissioner was in the chair and the hall was packed. One side was crowded with the red fezzes of the Arab Boys' supporters; girls from various schools filled the other.

Our team was composed of Chantal, with two other Goan girls, Maureen de Souza and Barbara Mendonca and an Indian Perrin Nasser.

The Arab leader's opening speech was vigorous. One of the points was that the sex of a girl could be determined by putting her in a room full of rats and cockroaches. She would scream. A boy would not. Chantal answered that: They could put her in such a room if they liked. She wasn't afraid of rats — or cockroaches. She wouldn't scream. According to their reasoning, then, she must be a boy.

Perrin emphasized the desirability of having an educated woman as a companion. No sensible husband wants a wife who is dumb in company. A business man does not want an ignorant secretary. An applicant for an office job shows her shorthand certificates; the boss yawns. She tells him her speed in typing; he rings for his morning coffee. She brings out a university degree—and he rings for coffee for her as well. (Incidentally, Perrin herself, much as she would like to go in for higher studies, being a *Muslim* of the Ithnashri community, is likely to be married fairly soon to whomsoever her father finds for her, with no 'ifs' or 'buts').

Maureen, usually nervous but in fine fettle this evening, pointed out the advantages a girl student enjoys: a gay social life, interesting lectures, games, outings, friendships — and a handsome husband is also sometimes acquired at college. (For this she was reproached by the next speaker with being an adventuress!)

Barbara drew attention to the fact that the wives

of several of the leading personalities of the town were university graduates or certified teachers. The gentlemen whose article we quoted the previous year was again enlisted on our side, his wife being a teacher at a boys' secondary school in Mombasa. Barbara has a somewhat imperious manner. She was not beseeching the audience to agree with her: she was telling them what they ought to think if they had any intelligence at all. Fortunately for her, they liked it.

The last speaker of the Arab Boys' team was like an overgrown puppet, arms, head and legs in perpetual motion, in deliberately exaggerated but unfailingly funny gestures. It was impossible to watch him without laughing. His reasoning was worthy of the choicest passages of "Alice in Wonderland." Chantal had mentioned that the government sponsored higher education for women. "The government?" he echoed. "Government of the people, for the people *by* the people! The government? *We* are the people. *We are* the government! What *we* say goes!"

Their leader did not manage so well in his final speech. Chantal on the other hand, administered some neatly worded snubs, condemning a few of the boys' remarks as "not only crude but rude." School-boys tend to use that approach in order to embarrass female debaters and we train our girls not to show embarrassment but, rather, mild disgust. They let everyone feel that they are not upset but that they perceive the boys lack the instincts of gentlemen!

The struggle was undoubtedly a close one. Eventually we heard that we had won the enormous cup. There were individual cups for both winners and runners-up (so our defeated opponents had some consolation to carry home with them) and, for good measure, Barbara received an extra cup for the best speaker in the debate.

The boys took the decision cheerfully, in a sporting way, and, hearing that our four girls intended to go in for higher studies, remarked with some relief: "In that case you won't be here to fight against us next year."

SISTER MARY CHRISTOPHER, W.S.



THE WHITE SISTERS AND EDUCATION

WOMEN OF TO-MORROW in NORTH AFRICA.
Sister Jean de Pathmos (French) and her young pupils, in ALGIERS.
(Photo Blondeau)



WOMEN of TO-MORROW in CENTRAL AFRICA.
Sister Noelita (Antonina Anna Strug from Hamtramck, Michigan) and her pupils, at Thika, KENYA.



Sister Myriem de la Providence (Belgian),
at Thika, KENYA.



In East and Central Africa. White Sisters are responsible for
the training of 17 different Congregations of Religious
which have now more than 2,000 Professed Sisters.



KNOW MORE IN ORDER TO SERVE BETTER

"The education of women is an essential factor in social evolution."

In order to meet the diverse educational needs in Africa today, White Sisters run many schools, — From Kindergarten to Teacher Training Colleges — including Primary and High Schools, Homecraft Centers as well as Commercial Courses.

"In actual fact the role of the educator and that of the missionary are one and the same: it consists in helping human beings, by teaching and by example, to know more clearly than conscience alone can teach them, and to carry out as perfectly as possible God's plan for them."

(Directory)

Sister Bride. (Ireland)

Secondary School, Nabbingo, UGANDA. A Sister who is a good educator will be penetrated with the thought that she herself is intervening in the destiny of human beings. (Directory)

"A healthy mind in a healthy body".

Secondary School, St. Charles, near ALGIERS.

(Photo Blondeau)





AND THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH

ARE LONG . . .

LONG . . .

THOUGHTS

(quotation from
Longfellow)

HOW COULD I EVER FORGET my North African pupils? . . . I can still see them arriving at school, seeking, unconsciously, perhaps, to deaden the disconcerting effects of the violent contrast between the medieval atmosphere of their ordinary milieu, and that of the ultra-modern college to which they came twice a day.

On one hand, the little narrow streets swarming with people; the houses — some rich, some miserably poor — jealously shut against the exterior; there was the all-powerful father, the mother loving but ignorant, the brother who kept an eye on you; and for the poorer, the lack of privacy. Numerous brothers and sisters, the need to help in household tasks, the absence of tables and sometimes even of electricity, made it difficult to do one's homework properly.

But inside the college, there were spacious classrooms with large windows opening onto the horizon, modern household equipment, tables, benches, . . . and teachers driving up in their cars . . .

Even after years, the daily transition between these two worlds is not easily accomplished: one must talk, talk, talk, — or be entirely silent and withdrawn . . .

The girls would arrive and wait in the courtyard—standing around with something of their mothers' passivity, that immobility of the women sitting in

the cemeteries on Fridays. The more studious would learn their lessons, many aloud, as was the habit in primary school when they were learning the Koran by heart.

My pupils were of extremely varied physical types—from the fair-haired to the very dark, nearly black-complexioned.

They were rarely vulgar — sometimes even surprisingly refined — the result of centuries of urban civilization; of very lively temperament they could pay attention for quite a while, then explode into unrestrained chattering; some were very gifted for painting and drawing, writing and poetry, but had great difficulty in accepting scientific laws: "We just cannot believe that the earth turns around the sun," politely remarked a sharp second-year pupil, who had perfectly understood the lesson; and the class's laugh echoed its agreement. Hard-working up till adolescence, then losing interest, many became rather lazy and seemingly incapable of reacting when an effort was called for, as in overcoming the heat of the climate.

No more deceitful than any other young girls of their age, they even consented — not without some difficulty, it is true — to marking their own exercises, and, like all children the world over, judged themselves more severely than their teachers.

They had no illusions about life — about the hard



How could I ever forget my North Africans pupils? . . .
Sister Jean du Prado (French) and her Secondary School pupils, at Laghouat, Sahara.

AND THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH ARE LONG, LONG THOUGHTS

life that awaited them, knowing that their studies would be only a short respite, and they were deeply concerned that few were the girls of their generation who would be allowed to decide their own future — hence their sadness and the reveries from which it was sometimes necessary to arouse them. Added to that was a sort of oppression caused by their consciousness of the briefness of all things and the almighty power of Allah.

* * * *

Christian celibacy and the gift of self to God and to others that it supposes, intrigued them, disconcerted them, was always for them an incomprehensible mystery that certain of them admired: "Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were Sisters in our religion?" one of them exclaimed once, before her companions.

I remember my surprise one day on discovering in the scribblings of a twelve-year-old, the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary." When I asked her where she had taken that, she said: "At your house last week. I was turning over the pages of a book

on the table when I saw these two prayers and I copied them. What beautiful prayers they are!"

* * * *

Most European teachers arriving in North Africa are either Christian or Marxist. Inevitably, sooner or later, the older pupils notice the divergence of their philosophies, and it adds to their bewilderment. "Not one of them believes in God any longer," declared a teacher who knew his 17-year-old pupils well. . .

One day during recreation, a group of pupils 15 and 16 years old, entered my classroom. "We would like to know why we are on this earth. Is there any meaning to life? We have asked three teachers this same question and have received three different answers. What is yours? . . ."

Catholic professors should neither strengthen the bonds that bind their pupils to Islam, nor advertise their own beliefs. However, it seems to me they should adopt a truly Christian attitude on three main points:

They had no illusions about life — and were anxious, knowing that few were the girls of their generation who would be allowed to decide freely of their own future.
Tunisian girls at work in a plastic factory at Sousse, Tunisia.



Photo Tunisian Republic.

The North Africa of tomorrow will be the result of a delicate blend of many choices made by North Africans today. On the family level, at least, the girls must be convinced that, no matter what else changes, happiness depends on the maintenance of the humble, old-fashioned virtues: devotedness, faithfulness, love of children, etc.

Next, a Catholic teacher should strive to show her pupils the link between the spiritual development of the Western world and the faith which is at its base, and the relation between the Christian religion and the progressive liberation of women.

Lastly, in the personal domain, Moslem girls, with that sure intuition which for long constituted the sum total of their knowledge, are quick to notice every detail of the daily lives of their teachers. Catholic professors can bring to their pupils the good example which may well be their silent but decisive testimony: good taste in clothes and bearing, essential in these countries where there exists so much laxity in this matter . . . a sense of peace — the spirit of peace — so important an antidote to

Marxist provocations to hatred . . . a certain integrity, and purity of heart and word in face of problems that the pupils inevitably bring up — sooner or later. These young Moslem girls have a profound need to drink at the crystal spring of Christian purity.

Two older pupils, both of them engaged to be married, asked me one day to their house. In the silence and semi-darkness of a room opening on the interior courtyard, one of them asked me suddenly: "Please tell us — how have you managed to remain as you are?" "By work and prayer," I answered. A poor answer, perhaps, given on the spur of the moment, but it left the girls pensive for a long moment.

* * * *

Arriving recently in a little-known town, I was immediately accosted by a young woman:

"Don't you know me?"

"No . . ."

She named herself — one of my former pupils. I could still see her, always sitting beside the same girl — the only one, seemingly, with whom she

My pupils were of extremely varied physical types — from the fair-haired to the very dark, nearly black-complexioned.



(Photo Tunisian Republic.)

AND THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH ARE LONG, LONG THOUGHTS

shared her solitude. Not very expansive and of apparently doubtful health, she was always an average pupil though attentive. She was one of those with whom I had had the least contact; once though, seeing her particularly sad, I had spoken a few rapid words of encouragement.

"This is my husband, studying at . . ." (naming a certain big school). What a surprise to find her so gay, physically improved, natural and evidently happy.

Her husband, very young — 22 or 23 years of age — invited me to tea at their place at eight o'clock that evening. I agreed, and at eight o'clock was shown into a modern two-room apartment, perfectly arranged.

Imagine my surprise when the young man said to me: "I know you very well. My wife has told me a lot about you. Oh, thank you so much for all you did for her. Your words helped her in a difficult moment. Now it is thanks to her that I can finish

my studies. She is working as a secretary till the end of the year."

Several books lay scattered on the divan. "We must do all in our power to help in the Moslem Woman's emancipation," he said, "Can you recommend some books on the subject?"

Meanwhile the young woman had returned. She had donned a traditional dress of shot silk which lent her an added dignity. Having prepared a tasty tea, she now came and sat down to enjoy my evident approval of her triumph, humble but real.

When, towards ten o'clock I prepared to take my leave, they would not hear of it. "Your room is ready," said the young woman. And when in fact I retired to it, I discovered that the young couple had given me their own room and were going to sleep on the couch in the drawing-room . . . Long thoughts prolonged my evening prayers.

Adapted from an article by
DOMINIQUE LASSEVOT



Sisters of the Assumption. KENYA.

They come from every walk of life and rank of society, but they are alike in quality of heart and mind: the elite of their race.

THEIR LIVES

PRAYER . . . SERVICE . . .

THEIR LIVES ... PRAYER ... SERVICE ...

THE WORDS "for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse — in sickness and in health" which every Christian bride hears on her wedding day, apply to Religious also, but in their case there is a happier conclusion, for instead of "till death do us part" each can say "till death do us unite in that heavenly bliss which can never be diminished."

As soon as Christianity started to spread in Africa, young women came forward, asking to become Religious. Knowing that the Church is never fully established in a country until its people have a sufficient number of priests and religious of their own race, the White Sisters from the beginning made the training of African Sisters their specialty. Whenever possible, novitiates were opened and local Congregations started. Since 1907, seventeen Institutes have been established in various parts of the continent, with a total of almost two thousand members. Five of the Sisterhoods are self-governing and the oldest, that of the Bannabikira in Buganda, has pontifical status.

And who are these Sisters? They come from every walk of life and rank of society, but they are alike in quality of heart and mind: the elite of their race. As far as possible each is given an opportunity to develop her talents. Has she an aptitude for teaching or nursing? She will be trained. Does she show talent for business affairs? She can learn secretarial work and help in the office work of the Congregation. Does she prefer needlework or homecraft? A Domestic Science Course will enable her to teach her young countrywomen how to make their homes more homelike, healthier and happier. In any event, the African Religious is a generous, high-spirited person, with an open mind, and a good sense of values.

When in 1907 the first African aspirants came to live together at Villa Maria in Buganda how their fellow-countrymen laughed at the mere idea of a group of the fairer sex being able to live together in harmony! "What, those young women live together and not quarrel! Impossible!" They said. They had reckoned without the grace of God. There are

A FRIENDLY and HAPPY COLLABORATION.

Sister Stanislas, of the Daughters of Mary, UGANDA, and Sister Patrick-Mary (Mary Patricia Forestell from Coniston, Ontario).



Photo Blondeau

today in that particular Congregation, over five hundred professed Sisters, some fifty novices and about forty-five postulants. The Institute has forty-six convents each with a primary school attached; several have a Junior Secondary School also. Some Sisters have taken up nursing, others are pursuing higher studies at home or abroad. Each is ready to undertake the work allotted to her by her Superiors. The other Congregations are developing along similar lines; some specialize in nursing, others in education, but all are destined to portray to their fellow countrymen "the Charity of Christ."

It is difficult to assess the all-pervading influence of these Sisters on African life, especially on that of the women. They have proved to men that their womenfolk are not the nonentities they thought them, but women capable of great things. Moreover, they have got the women themselves to see it. The spirit of self-sacrifice in their community life where all is shared in common, where "mine" no longer exists; the good organization both of their convents and of

the schools or hospitals in their charge; their initiative and reliability — have shown the Africans of both sexes what women can do. They have their eyes wide open to the needs of all, be they pupils in their schools, village people they have visited, patients they have treated. That is why so many Africans, men and women, young and old, bring them their problems, their doubts and difficulties, their sorrows and also their joys. To them the Sister is a "spiritual mother" whose mission in life is to look after her spiritual children and by her loving service help them on the road to Heaven. When the new baby arrives the happy father rushes off with the good news to the Sisters; when a child is doing badly in school its parents consult the Sisters; if a woman is having a hard time putting up with a wayward husband, it is to the Sisters she tells her troubles, from them she receives advice and in their little chapel prays for strength to endure, to go on being lovingly faithful to the end. After High Mass on Sunday a long line of visitors wends its way to the Sisters'. Some are

A Novice.
Daughters of Mary. UGANDA.

"Lord in the simplicity of my heart, I offer myself to Thee this day . . ."



Photo: White Sisters

A Postulant of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate. Ghana.

Many are the young African girls, who, in order to follow their religious vocation, give up well-paid situations, and renounce a promising future,



Photo: White Sisters

THEIR LIVES . . . PRAYER . . . SERVICE . . .

just going to say "How do you do," others want to know whether Felicita has the makings of a good nurse or whether she would make a better teacher, whether Jane is clever enough to go on to higher studies, what to do with Anna who, though intelligent, is wasting her time at school. And the Sisters discuss these problems with the parents, help them to see the good points of their offspring as well as their weak ones, help them to apply to their problems psychology in its oldest-known form, the psychology of common sense.

But there are several fields in which the influence of the African Sisters has been paramount: in raising the African woman from the position of an inferior to that of man's equal, his helpmate; and in arousing and fostering priestly vocations among young boys. The former has been brought about by their lives of dedicated service, their religious status, their influence on the families they visit or come into contact with through pupils or hospital work. Men,

seeing women of their own race living such dedicated lives, have learned to respect them and through them African womanhood. This has led them to allow their own daughters to be educated and their first education naturally falls into the hands of the Sisters. It is they who form the small child's heart and conscience, who inculcate religious principles, and, as the child develops, all the Christian virtues so necessary in the Catholic mother and home-maker. For on these girls will later fall the duty of bringing up their children in the love and fear of God.

African Sisters prepare young boys and girls for the reception of the Sacraments and many an African priest claims that he owes his vocation to the Sister who prepared him for his first Holy Communion. My first impression of such a group of boys was that of a mass of wriggling, teasing little imps, pushing and pinching each other, their black eyes almost popping out of their heads with mischief. How I pitied the Sister who had to get some religion

Sister of Mary Immaculate, Ghana.

For the Christian world, the African Sister is a source of joy and hope. For her people she is also the "sister", the "mother" who cares for, consoles and instructs . . . above all she it is who prays . . .



Photo: White Sisters

Daughters of Mary, Queen of the Apostles. Kivu.

African Sisters prepare young boys and girls for the reception of the Sacraments and many an African priest claims that he owes his vocation to the Sister who prepared him for his first Holy Communion.



Photo: White Fathers

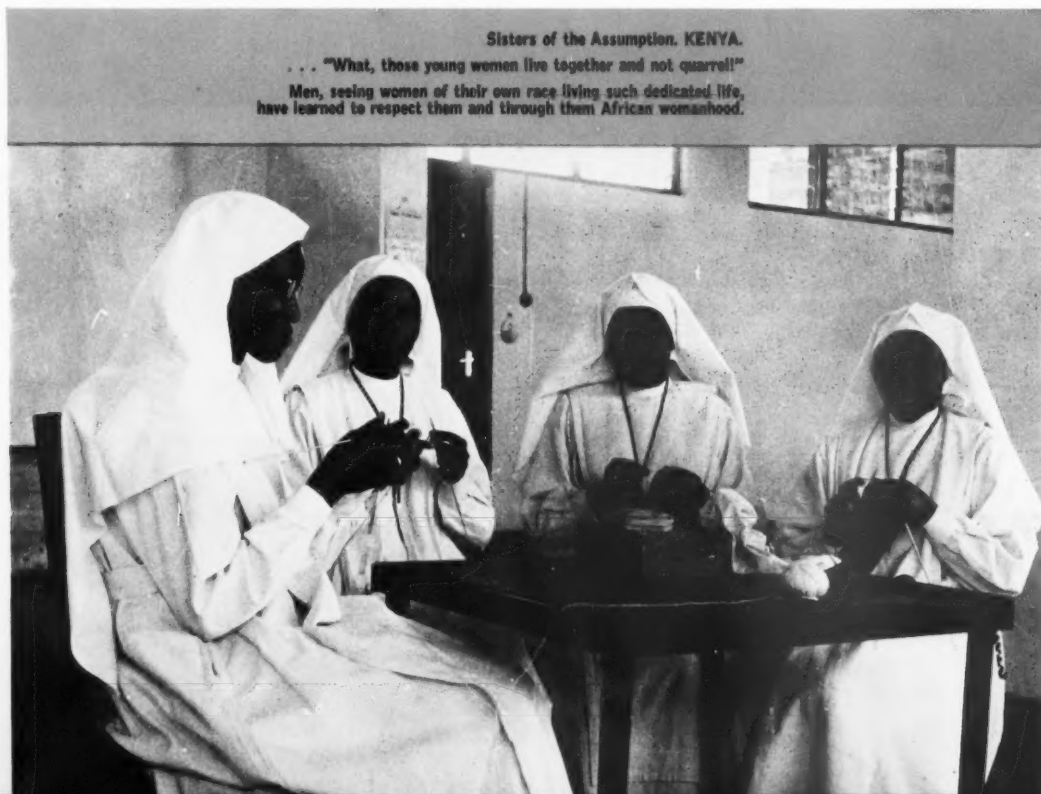
into those heads! — but I might have spared my sympathy — it was not at all needed. The Sister could manage her small charges very well and if they did shout rather a lot when answering at Mass, which hurt more sensitive ears, at least they were taking part, doing their share. Like all boys, their naughtiness is sheer, healthy exuberance which must have an outlet. But it does not prevent God's word from penetrating their young hearts and the good seed sown by the Sisters bears good fruit. A young boy feels the Lord's call; he asks for the Sister's prayers and advice. She encourages him to hold on right through Primary School, Minor Seminary years, then Major Seminary until the final goal is reached. Every report he gets is shown to the Sister who taught him his catechism, who helped him to understand the "gift of God" and the tremendous grace of the Priesthood. Each letter brings the same request: "Pray and get prayers for my perseverance, so that one day I may have the joy of standing at the Altar of God, an ordained priest." And when the day

comes, the Sister, one of the first to receive an invitation, is there to see her spiritual son ordained a PRIEST FOREVER. Now she tastes the reward of her sacrifice. And the next morning the newly-ordained says his first Mass in the convent chapel, a Mass of thanksgiving for all the graces received through that Sister, but above all to thank God for having chosen him to be a priest.

The big problem of each African Sisterhood now, of course, is keeping up with the demand for higher education and greater opportunities for girls. The Sisters must continue to study, they need additional diplomas and degrees; whenever possible they should study abroad in order to be able to help the youngsters facing a rapidly expanding world. Their needs are great, but they are confident that the Lord Who has called them will also provide them with the means, spiritual and material, to become better workers in His vineyard.

SISTER MARY BRIDE, W.S.

Photo: White Sisters



A GREAT DAY AT THE WHITE SISTERS, FRANKLIN, PA.



Mother Elizabeth Anne receiving a gift from Archbishop Gannon of Erie, Pa.

On July 30th, His Lordship, Bishop McManaman solemnly blessed the new chapel of the White Sisters' American Novitiate and Postulate.

Day after day in this Novitiate chapel . . . as in all their chapels throughout the world, the White Sisters pray fervently for their benefactors, relatives and friends, whose untiring generosity permits them to carry out their missionary work in Africa.

To all their benefactors and friends of the missions, to the parents who give their children to God, the White Sisters wish to express their deepest gratitude.

"A Christian community which gives its sons and daughters to the Church cannot die. And, if it is true that the supernatural life of charity grows with the giving of one's self, it can be asserted that the Catholic Vitality of a nation is measured by the sacrifices it is capable of making for "the Missionary Cause" . . . (Pius XII).

HAPPY NEW YEAR

May The Blessings of Christmas Extend Far Into The New Year Sanctifying And Prospering Each Day

FROM THE STAFF OF MAGAZINE

ON THREE CONTINENTS

While Sister Mary Rosilda (Jeannette Dastous, of Lowell, Massachusetts) was making her perpetual profession in France, two other American White Sisters were giving themselves to God forever on two other continents: Sister Mary Steven (Dolores Sandrock, of Chicago, Ill.) in Tanganyika, Sister Mary Justina (Bernadette Joennies, of Albers, Ill.) at Franklin, Pa.

Sister Mary Rosilda



Sister Mary Steven

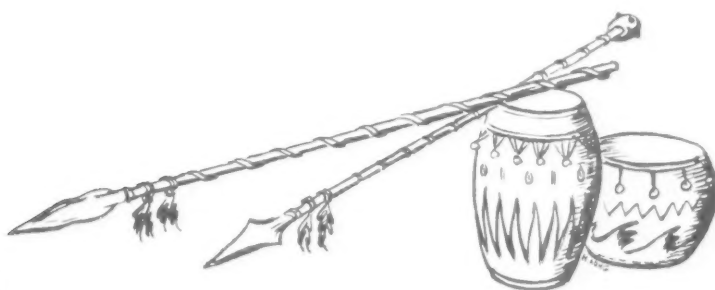


Sister Mary Justina



africa

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM



RATES
3 years \$5 1 year \$2
(Foreign subscriptions—50 cents extra)

Kindly enter subscriptions to **africa** for the following. I understand the subscription will start with the next issue and a gift card showing my name as donor will be enclosed:

Name _____
(PLEASE PRINT NAMES AND ADDRESSES)

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Send Gift Card Signed _____

☐ New ☐ Renew

Name _____
(PLEASE PRINT NAMES AND ADDRESSES)

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Send Gift Card Signed _____

☐ New ☐ Renew

- ☐ Check for \$ _____ enclosed.
☐ Bill me.
☐ Enter my own subscription for one year.
☐ New ☐ Renewal

Name _____
(PLEASE PRINT NAMES AND ADDRESSES)

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Send Gift Card Signed _____

☐ New ☐ Renew

Name _____
(PLEASE PRINT NAMES AND ADDRESSES)

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Send Gift Card Signed _____

☐ New ☐ Renew

My name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

africa



Photo: UNESCO—Paul Almay.



Missionary Sisters Of Our Lady Of Africa • 319 MIDDLESEX AVE. • METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY

Printed by Sullivan Bros., Lowell, Mass.

